



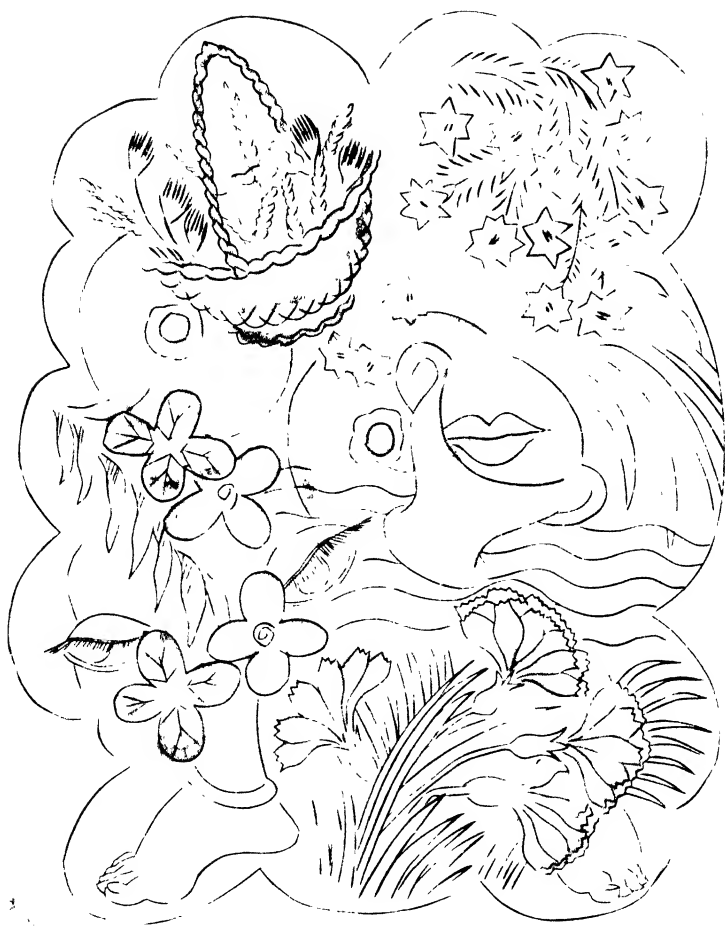
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*Volume 9*  
*The Loves of Dāsīn*  
*and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
*from the Tamashek and*  
*Camel-Boy Rhythms*  
*from the Arabic*







# EASTERN LOVE



THE LOVES OF DĀSĪN AND  
MUSA-AG-AMĀSTĀN FROM THE  
TAMASHEK AND CAMEL-BOY  
RHYTHMS FROM THE ARABIC



ENGLISH VERSIONS BY  
E. POWYS MATHERS



\*  
VOLUME IX



JOHN RODKER  
FOR SUBSCRIBERS  
LONDON, 1929



*for*  
E. R. M.

**MADE IN ENGLAND**

THIS EDITION OF THE LOVES OF DĀSIN AND  
MUSA-AG-AMĀSTĀN FROM THE TAMASHEK  
AND CAMEL-BOY RHYTHMS FROM THE  
ARABIC, BEING VOLUME 9 OF "EASTERN  
LOVE," IS HERE TRANSLATED INTO  
ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST TIME, BY E.  
POWYS MATHERS. THE EDITION OF 1,000  
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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*THIS volume combines with III, IV and VIII, and The Garden of Caresses and some few literary poems and prose pieces which will be found in the Anthology, to complete my examples of the Islamic conception of sex in art. This conception is discussed in the Terminal Essay.*

*The Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān, the first instance, as far as I know, of Tamashek literature to be translated into English, are interesting as being a compression of the orally transmitted songs of a mystical Tuareg fighter and nobleman, who was actually living them as he sang them, and which yet, in their least personal aspect, are founded on infinitely older traditional poems. Musa-ag-Amāstān died at Tamanr'asset on the 13th December, 1920, in the fashion, and after the happenings, told by the poem; and he was already a figure of legend. But the facts which are mingled with his vision may be taken as historical.*

*Camel-Boy Rhythms are examples of purely popular, as opposed to literary, verse. And though some are obviously modern the majority would be no easier to date than any other folk-songs. They derive from the chants of the camel driver leading the caravan, and the four heavy steps of the animal supply the measure, though the songs themselves, of course, are as likely to be heard now at a café as on the march. I*

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*have chosen out of rather a large quantity of material only such poems as seem to me to give the spontaneous imagery of the Bedouin at its freshest and most startling.*

*In this volume I have selected and translated from  
'Chants du Hoggar' by A. Maraval-Berthoin, 'Les  
Chants du Sable' by Émile Aicard, 'Chants  
de la Caravane' by S. Oudiane, and  
'Une Chamelée Ritbmique'  
by H. F. Bertnay.*

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*The Loves of Dāsīn  
and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

*Glory be to the Sole God,  
for none but He continues!*



BOOK I

*The Asking and Refusal*



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## I.

**D**ĀSĪN AMONG THE WOMEN IS A VINE  
plant among wild plum trees,

Dāsīn among the women is a date tree among  
fan palms,

Dāsīn among the women is a king's shield with  
daily shields,

Dāsīn among the women is a bride's tunic with  
common tunics,

Dāsīn among the women is a javelin between  
lances.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, it is your cousin, the son of  
the sister of your mother, it is Musa-ag-  
Amāštān who sends this message :

He is as young as the new rice, as  
noble as his fighting sword, because you love  
him.

He has a beard of black silk, and none has seen  
it. It is under his black veil, because you  
love him.

Will you receive him at your gallant party ?

## 2.

Because my head was fated to rise above others,  
my mother bound strong cords about my  
brow.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

You will know me, as a royal palm above all  
palm trees, at your gallant party,  
O you whose brow rises above the brows of  
women.

3.

This is the gallant party of my beloved.  
And the swords of the men are more golden, the  
women more fairly painted.  
Hers is the most noted of gallant parties, be it  
under a royal tent with decorated pegs, or  
beneath the tent of a tree, its leaves kissing her  
forehead, or below the tent of a mountain,  
its rocks bowing before her.

4.

I say to all women :  
If a man hide himself in the time of combat,  
spread curses upon him.  
At morning there was given a gallant party, the  
thrown javelins wove a tent of steel above  
us.  
My enemies fled and I struck their limbs with  
my sabre ; they flew into the air like grass  
stems.

*From the Tamashek*

5.

O women who put blue between your lips and nostrils, I tell you their blood clothed me to the wrists in purple.

You have not heard it said that I hid in the rocks.

O young women coming together at the sound of the violin, fainting in three charges I was lifted and bound with cords upon my camel.

6.

I made ready for your gallant party, O Dāsīn.

I folded my blue gandourah over my white gandourah, in the way of a swallow's wings.

My boots of black leather and red leather seemed to be crushing poppies below my feet.

My collar of dark stone carries the words of safety.

My bracelets bind the strength of my naked arms.

My turban of tinted silks is bound by a cord with two dark tassels, and my black veil is holding the secret of my mouth.

I have taken the most glorious of all my lances.

## *Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

### 7.

My shield is made to my height with double antelope skin, and my lance is barbed with black steel.

My sabre served the father of my father. It has *Death for Death* upon its blade in letters of red combat.

O Dāsīn in your gallant party, riches and nobility and unbound strength lie at your feet. Behold me also !

I am the son of your mother's sister, and my blood runs in your body. But I have waited to tell you that I love you until the day of my harka chieftainship.

### 8.

With what proof will you try us, O Dāsīn ?

The learned must bring forth from the oasis of his thought, as from a precious box, words to caress like the red fig tree,

Words having the sugar of the grapes of the Tihoq,

The colour of rose trees,

The colour of the white bells of the desert broom and the gold scapes of the plum tree.

*From the Tamashek*

You have compared the mind of a fool to a man clad in a single tunic, to a beggar whose body may be seen through rags.

I ask God to breathe one breath of His spirit into my spirit, I beseech Him to clothe it in colour.

To-day will you find me rich in many tunics ?

9.

My most grave voice has not the sound to sing of pleasant things ; it rolls as a war drum or murmurs as a violin for pain, Dāsīn.

If you had asked me : *Which do you love the better, God or myself?* I would have looked and been silent.

But you would not question me ; you broke the bright snares of your wit because you loved me.

10.

Will you rule at my side, O daughter of him who ruled before me ?

Do not fear that I would make you a prisoner in my love, or keep you as a sand deer behind my fences.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

Walk free in the garden of my heart, Dāsīn.

I put my faith in you, O rose of my people, my  
blue mountain. I put my faith in you, O  
carpet of white wool, O my brown water jar.

I put my faith in her I love, my green river.

You are the perfumed of the proudest, you are  
the coolest of the beautiful.

And I am greater than the greatest who was  
your father, because I marry you.

II.

Those who are jealous say to me :

Dāsīn is the rose and the bird of our Spring-  
time, how shall you hinder the rose from  
giving her perfume to the people, or the bird  
her song ?

And I say to those who are jealous :

I shall be the Kādī of the Kādī of the Summer  
for the rose of the Springtime.

I shall be Sidi of Happiness, seeing the grass  
flower, seeing the grass flower under the green  
hoofs of my white horse.

12.

I shall be the nest of the sun for the bird of my  
people.

*From the Tamashek*

A stranger passing through our land sees you but once, yet he does not forget you ; he departs and engenders children like you, and they say your name in their first murmuring.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, you put heat into my heart as God does, and you embrace it ; you are the mother of the children of the thought of the men who love you.

I have loved you since the bellies of our mothers ripened. I loved you when you were the president of little gallant parties and I led small battalions.

Dāsīn is my lover, and all that I see in her is pleasant.

A man beholding her cannot turn away his head ; a foe may wound a man who looks at her and yet draw no blood.

When you say : *I am noble*, she answers in the words of her sister : *God is not God at night*.

13.

The neck of Dāsīn is more pliant than the neck of a foal tied in a field of corn and barley.

God has made her to be a harmony, and full of seemliness.

No woman may find the poorest of husbands while my beloved strays free in the lanes of gallantry.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

14.

Dāsīn gives herself fine colours of ochre and indigo, like the yellow and blue mountain that dominates all men.

She walks with a tossing head. Her uncle is worn with answering the men who ask for her.

Your voice to your violin climbs in the sky and then falls back to my heart.

Your voice to your violin is a jet of water lifting to the sky among cypresses.

Your voice to your violin is silver, a river falling among the rocks.

15.

O you who listen to all voices and make them sing thereafter upon your violin, as the wind makes joy and sorrow chant in the grass of the rice-field,

Now hear the heart of Musa-ag-Amāstān to answer for my heart,

Now hear the voice of his father to vouch for his quality :

We die by gunpowder, not by disdain.

*From the Tamashek*

16.

When my father set me on his right hand for the combat, he said to me :

‘ Let not your love for any woman transcend your love for fighting.’

Therefore I, yet being your slave, must be strong to love you less than I love the combat.

I am climbing to the sky, like the peak Ilaman.

When my father set me on his right hand for prayer, he said to me :

‘ Let not your love for a woman transcend your love for love. If she seek another, tell her farewell and ride to forget her in the mosque with the sand carpet.’

Must I carry my prayers to the mosque with the sand carpet, Dāsīn-ult-Yema ?

When my father set me on his right hand for grief, he said to me :

‘ Even if a man such as I displease a woman, even if a man such as this eagle my son displease a woman, let him be held apart, a camel that has not been chosen for the journey, a dog that has been driven from the feast.

‘ But if a woman cannot leave you with her eyes, take her without remorse and kill for her.’

If your eyes cling to mine, Dāsīn, and cannot look away, I shall know how to pour you the

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
red wine of men and women to drink it with  
you, for vengeance is whiter and sweeter than  
the milk of camels.

You are as free as the moon in the sky to hide  
or show yourself, Dāsīn. If you answer me as  
the moon answers the sun, I can be forgotten.  
You may change your love as your feet change  
their sandals.

But you must take a husband at the marriage  
time of the seed and the furrow, when our  
women sow their fields ; and they say there  
are but three men to your liking.

Suri-ag-Shika will come to you in a cloak  
of words, Aflān in majesty and Musa with a  
sword.

Will it be wit or pride or love, Dāsīn ?

18.

The sun has risen upon the day of your choosing,  
O Dāsīn, and the stars of our lance-heads  
answer him.

Great Tamanr'asset is too small for the zebus  
bearing gifts to you ; they move with diffi-  
culty to the singing of the tribes, under the  
glance of the terraces.

*From the Tamashek*

19.

O daughter of the star who pastures his gold camel on the black grass of the night, you have not wished one jewel on your white flesh to-day.

Your negress wears all the coloured moons of your coffer, and walks perfumed in oil. She casts a glittering shadow within your shadow, and knows your secret.

But you are sweeter before your dwelling than sugar bread, being as unadorned as God.

20.

We were ranged about you as the crescent moon is ranged at the feet of Allāh.

You chose Aflān superb on his white camel, and my red camel is crying beneath my blows.

. . .



BOOK II

*Exile and Combat*



I.

I NO LONGER RECKON THE STAGES OF MY caravan, and yet my grief still tastes of blood, and I am killing Aflān in my dreams. A lie gives to drink once, it cannot give to drink a second time. Let yours be a joy that lies not, and may God pardon me. He who is inconstant as the froth of milk builds nothing durable ; may the oath of Aflān be a sure support to you.

2.

I use my sword against my jealousy. Engraved on the black stone bracelet constraining my great strength, you may read that Hell herself cowers from dishonour. You may set up a new tent among the tents with Aflān the golden, and not fear my grief. But let him not be as the sweet date whose heart is bitter, or as one of whom it is said *He has eaten gazelle*, because he bounds from oasis to oasis after women.

3.

Aflān is the husband of your flesh.  
As locusts upon the rice-field, as falcons above

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
the herd, as vultures disarranging a mound of  
corpses, so are my griefs to me.  
Aflān is the husband of your flesh.  
I carry the rice-field of my learning, the herd of  
my desires, and the green corpses of my hope.  
I shall be faithful.  
I am the bridegroom of your thought, and dare  
to journey away and away from you.

4.

My white camel forgets at will the perfumed  
berries of the gum tree. He will only eat  
bitter herb and teasels when he has no she-  
camel.  
I wish to forget the days shaded by gum trees, or  
days caressed by the deep-scented terebinth.

5.

Last night we made our camels kneel at the foot  
of a wall looking upon space, and, behold,  
Suri-ag-Shika came to me, and saluted my  
grief.  
Now we have talked late, and have agreed to  
twine the thorns of our desolation together,  
our emptiness of Dāsīn.

*From the Tamashek*

He has been banished from his people for the murder of the beautiful camel of Aflān. His anguish has overflowed the torrent of his heart, but my heart is a ravine of granite to control my grief.

I shall be a man blinded by Dāsīn, and Suri shall be my stick; we will drink the forgetful poppy of the blood of man.

6.

We marched eternally, and once by a well we crossed our Brothers of the proud Veil. They had sold arms among the blacks, and a song guided their camels.

They were jinking gold and silver in their hands, and would see Dāsīn. The humps of their camels were full of fat, and the bellies of their sheep were moons. And they were laughing. The blacks seem to have nothing but vermin in their heads, our brothers say, but their charges for grass pass understanding.

7.

They joyfully played the war game, and I looked upon their play and their playing was beautiful,

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
and the camels, driven by the naked feet of  
their masters, shared the pleasure.  
And I gave the shield of strength and the sword  
of courage to a certain Amrar, but in the dust  
that rose like gilded muslin I saw the veiled  
Dāsīn.

8.

And they joyfully played at gallant parties, to  
celebrate the caressing, the sole one, and they  
said :  
*She is silver and gold hammered together. She is the  
wine of my mouth. She is a garden in sleep, the  
water of the well preferred, a sky under which  
the brave shall some day lie at rest.*  
*It is for you, who love her more than the sum  
of us, to tell us what she is.*

9.

Then I said to my brothers :  
Dāsīn is the dove and the jackal, the bed and the  
sepulchre, she is Hell and Allāh.  
This is a thing not doubtful, a thing certain, that  
I should be lying by the side of God to-night if  
love could kill.  
This is a thing not doubtful, a thing certain, that

*From the Iamashek*

if I were a son of the dust, I would leave the  
comfort of my tomb to see Dāsīn.

I would have her to the warm fold of her heart,  
and mix in the air she breathed, if I were a son  
of the dust, if love could kill.

10.

Then one whom we call the Bee of Love,  
though he finds consolation in wasps of women,  
hearts without honey, said to me :

O Musa, they are not worth our fighting camels,  
for these return to us.

Come back and steal her away and have her,  
struggling. A blow over the mouth is better  
than compliments.

11.

And one who is ever laughing said to me, he  
was my friend :

Aflān has nothing in his head but pride, in his  
heart nothing but glory. She will soon cast  
him off. These things are little food for  
women.

There was a girl who wept like rain and cried  
like a milk-camel for her man, lying upon his

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
sepulchre. And on the dawn of the fourth  
month she kissed the Book and tasted salt and  
said : *Make my new robe of happiness, O sisters.*

12.

But I said :

Your love is rough for my heart, Dāsīn ; it has  
fulfilled its thirst out of the blood of my flesh.  
I am bones breathing slowly, breathing in  
silence.

There was a soul, and a city of tortures was built  
in it, and yet it lived.

That was my soul. Oh, go to your gallant  
parties !

The swords are calling me and my camel, who  
are two fighters, for we have lost Dāsīn.  
Speak to him of blood and he gallops furiously,  
and for me, my pride of strength sets me taller  
than my tall camel.

We go with our brothers to raid the Arab dogs,  
and the dagger of the raid is in our teeth. But  
the dagger of vengeance is in our eyes, slaying  
two for one.

Their bones will crack in the palms of our  
hands like breaking lances, their walls will

*From the Tāmashek*

crumble under the hammer of our knees as haystacks fall. For it is better to sleep the night with rage than with repentance.

14.

And death became Dāsīn and would have none of me. But he took a certain one for his lion's meal, blinded by a dagger and driven mad and trying to blind the sun, and he took the heart of a certain one opened as an orange, and the head of a certain one shattered as a pomegranate, and the bowels of a certain one leaping out and rolling like red snakes, and a certain one nailed to the sand by four lances.

We dug us pits in the sand, and became very earth within them, and knew the unsatisfied hunger of the grave.

Earth lets a man from her jaws for a little space, as a panther a rabbit, and we call it life.

So we lay in wait and killed them behind black shields.

15.

Night adds his treasure to my treasures, I walk on the sky's black rock, where the straw wagon

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
climbing to God makes a white road, and  
follow your steps across the time of time.

As the wagon sows her white straw, I sow the  
letters of your name between the stars.

I took my brothers to the oasis whose guards  
defend no more.

Hidden by the green wall of the palms and the  
red wall of the wall, the dates and women  
sleep, O dates and sugary women for my  
brothers.

They smell the life of the white date flowers and  
the rose smell of the women, and what we  
cannot bear away we crush under our heels,  
Dāsīn.

How shall I tell you of the drunkenness of  
killing, you who know love?

They are the two daughters of the panther, and  
bring life in sleep.

I would put the bitter taste of my kisses in your  
mouth to-night.

And when that oasis was emptied like a bag, we  
went to another, but there was a cry in the  
night: *The white camel is dying.*

His kneeling female chewed the invisible grass  
of prayer, the water of her glance flowed from  
the white camel to us, and from us to  
God.

He fought against death with the four lances of  
his stiffening legs, and cried *Dāsīn.*

*From the Tamashek*

16.

O you who love the victorious warrior, yourself greatly victorious, this shadow upon the shadow of the earth is of our fighting shields, as dear as our sons to us, and guarding our sleep. If your jasmine finger touched them they would tremble, if you laid your jasmine ear to them you would hear blood cries.

17.

We went slowly, weighed down with weariness and plunder, and other Arabs spied us with the white eyes of rage, and fell upon us. My brothers were still drunk with the palm wine of pleasure, and fell like dates, and I alone remained alive. Dāsīn, you hold my life and death between your hands, and play with them as a child plays.

18.

I washed my brothers with sand and dug their graves, and my weeping mingled with my sweat.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

And my brown camel was weeping for the death  
of my white camel. He is as tall as two men,  
and his feet are as large as war drums. I set my  
saddle of cheetah skin upon him.

O mahogany camel with white feet, time is a  
great Amenokhal, he rules eternity.

Why do you seem to snuff Dāsīn in all the  
breezes?

You bear me through the moonlight, red camel,  
and your eyes desire the clouds. But I have  
lost death and I have lost Dāsīn.

. . .

BOOK III

*The Dream and the Desire*



---

I.

AND MY THIRST FOR DĀSĪN GREW GREATER  
sun by sun.

I declared war upon myself, that I might forget  
her, but the ringdoves of my thought were  
true to her.

Then silence fell on me like sand, and I could not  
cut her name out of my flesh.

And I said your name in the chaplet of the days  
with the name of Allāh, because, though it is  
my hunger and thirst, it feeds me and gives me  
to drink.

2.

There came a man against me rearing like  
a horse and crying: *I love Dāsīn*. But I  
bounded higher than he and broke his lance.  
I would have killed him if I had not seen my  
shield upon his arm.

‘Who are you,’ I cried, ‘who fight in the same  
fashion as Musa-ag-Amāstān and with his  
weapons?’

Then he unveiled his face, and his face was mine.

3.

And that man drew me into a cave where none  
might enter, and there I slew a beast as great

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
as a zebu. She was curled like a hedgehog  
into a ball, and spurted scalding water.  
And I said : ‘ Dāsīn will sing, because she  
feared for her lovers.’

4.

I left that cave and heard the bleating of a kid.  
But when I sought for it, it was a snake as long  
as six men, and there were buck’s horns upon  
his head in a toothed wheel.  
And I thought I had killed evil with my sword,  
having killed the snake, but the eldest brother  
of the lizard said to me :  
*Evil must be, for it is the night of good.*  
And I saw you smile, Dāsīn.

5.

Night was the blue veil of the giant Elias, whose  
body is a gold column that the sand sends up  
to God. And my camel, kneeling to kiss his  
feet, seemed a white ant beside him.  
Then the giant Elias fought with the mountain,  
and split her to the heart with a single blow,  
so that the desert cried with the voice of the  
serpent of the lightning from East to West,

*From the Tamashek*

because there was now a breach for my heart  
to come to Dāsīn.

And in the green fountain of a tree I saw two  
ring-doves building.

Do you not hear my heart moaning against  
yours ?

6.

A swallow, writing the name of Dāsīn in the sky,  
cried out *I hear your hearts*, and all the other  
birds sang in the sun of her.

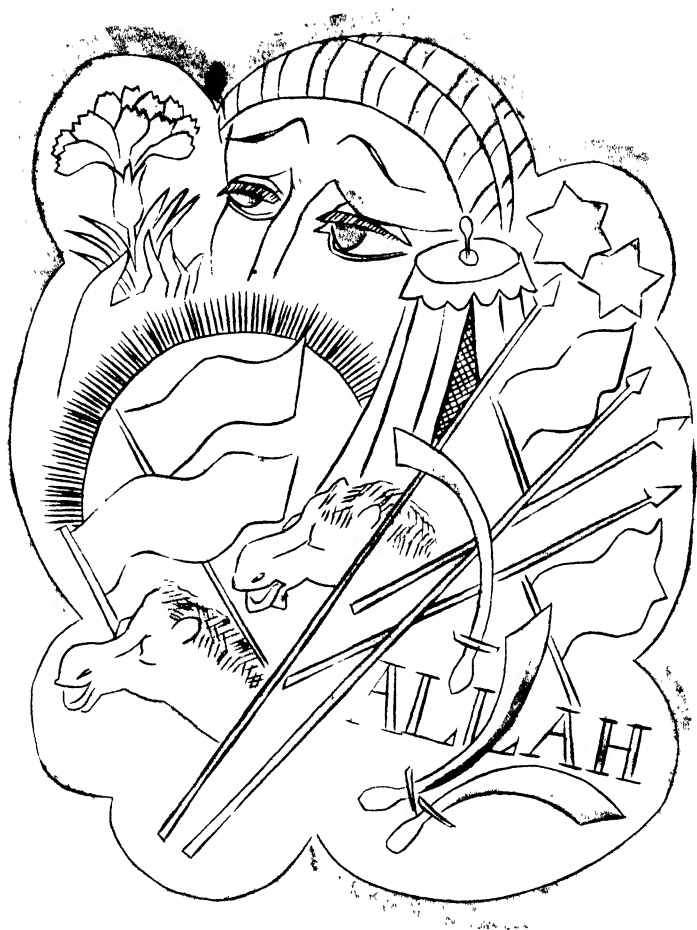
And because her wing came back, the flowers  
wrapped jewelled collars upon the branches,  
and I felt your arms.

7.

And the four gates of the sky compassed me  
with their pillars, and the North gate set a  
platter of cool blue china at my feet, with  
oranges and grapes and figs and pomegranates,  
from the lands which go down to ocean.

Gather the honey of the Western combs of the  
sun, said the second gate.

And the third gate showed me the blood of  
dawn spilled on the tombs of the stars.



*From the Tamashek*

9.

I met the caravan of the sins, and they wished to kill my white camel because he carried my white thought. But I was stronger, and they knelt down to me, crying with closed lips : *When we cannot cut off a hand, we kiss it.* Their camels had the heads of apes.

I met the caravan of the merchants, each with the eyes of a wild cat, shining in the night, and their hands were the hands of vultures.

They said in frightened voices : *We are poor and weary beneath the gold of the sun, ah, pity us !*

10.

Thereafter my camel was whipped by the wind of the South, and in that region whither he fled he started an ostrich.

My shadow, stretching before me, gave birth to a gold rider in a gold bernous, and we four hunted the bird until evening lavished a woman's smile upon the desert, and sunset held forth an ostrich plume for Dāsīn-ult-Yema, and the rose chamber of the sky was shut.

## *Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

### II.

The mirage built a city to hear me speak of you,  
Dāsīn, and I said to the priests and the warriors  
and the shepherds of that city that you  
were the rose of my people, wearing the new  
moon, and a star as bait for kisses.

### 12.

And when the mirage had veiled herself like a  
man to hear me speak of you, I said to the  
passing fever :

O red eyes of the hunting leopard, O hashish  
laugh and lioness hair, O hot hands of the  
monkey, what make you against Dāsīn ?

And fever, tittering, put aside her yellow veil  
and said : *Behold, she is here !*

And I saw you with hands that danced in the  
dancing sand ; you were a statue of white salt,  
and your hands alone were living.

### 13.

Tell me life with its milk and jasmine, its honey  
and roses, its pepper and henna, its falcon and  
knife.

*From the Tamasbek*

I set the seal of love upon your mouth, and  
possessed you as the sky possesses the mountain,  
as the mountain the plain.

But you melted like salt between my hands, and  
fever with her red eyes melted also.

14.

And a leopard said to me : *I am hungry for her  
even as you are.*

And I said to the leopard :

O my fighting brother, we are dressed alike in  
night and yellow day, and it is not by fasting  
that we die, but by desire. Carry me, therefore,  
to the place of her violin and the light of  
her singing.

But the leopard was jealous and would not  
bear me.

15.

The wind carried your caravan towards me and  
I saw your gilded camels and heard your  
voice.

But when I would seize you, the wind fluttered  
his veil before my eyes, and threw me blind to  
the desert.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

16.

Then came thirst to me, with her hands of hot ashes, and she gripped me so that your name came forth from my lips. And dream with his eagle's wings set you before me, and you carried a jar upon your shoulder, silvered with water.

The hot ashes of thirst were quenched in your breath and scattered under the healing nakedness of your feet, your feet that assuage like water.

17.

But thirst rose up to snatch your jar from you with hands of flame, and as she burned your shadow, she whispered to you :

‘ There is one thing you may not steal from me even in dream, and that is the sacred cataract of my water, for the Sages alone shall give it, to each according to the number of his palm trees the Sages give it.’

O Dāsīn, let him be as a dog with green slaver, that flees from water and is killed by man.

*From the Tamashek*

18.

Then death lifted the cover of the sand dune.  
She has a black viper for a collar about her  
neck, and her neck is of bone, and her heart is  
a red scorpion.

She speaks not, because the wild cat of the night  
has eaten her tongue.

She showed me the grave and made me a sign to  
lie down within it, and gave me hashish.

The scorpion and the viper are blood and  
shadow. They danced the leaping dance of  
hashish upon my bones.

Their eyes shone like red stars, and they coupled  
upon my body until death called them with her  
empty eyes.

19.

Death came to me, wearing the white haik of  
the moon ; and her black hands in the wet  
shadow buried the dead ; and night that has a  
jackal's voice beheld her.

Death left only your name living on the dead  
sand.

And the mountains, with their brows of stone,  
rose up to pray at my dying.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

They had been dead so long, and told me the peace of the dead. It is a light, whose seven rays are seven rivers.

20.

I, being ash within my tomb of ashes, saw you put on the seven veils of light and rule the seven rivers.

And I heard the voice of my mother, singing in my sleep :

‘ When you must weep, O blood of the lion and my blood, the mimosa and the palm weep also, and the horse and the camel and your mother weep.’

But your red voice, O Dāsīn, covered her white voice, and said :

‘ The song of the mother is milk, but the song of the mistress is of palm tree wine.’

And the milk song lulled me in my cradle on the branch of the gum tree :

21.

‘ Do not weep, lamb hot against my heart, but suck this milk and that.

‘ I have put wild mint upon you, and when you are grown you shall say :

*From the Tamashek*

*'Your milk was sweeter than dates and clearer than the light of the sun and moon, therefore I have increased as a palm tree.'*

22.

And the voice of my mother fell silent, and all was covered in the unmoving dance of the sand, except your name.

I will no longer say your name, for I needs must fear it. As is the name of fire to the negro, so is your name to me. They say :

*It is a red word like a red flame to burn the tongue that speaks it.*

23.

Your name alone comes forth from the tall tower of my head, like the torch of a palm tree shaken in the South wind.

I am a bloody lance lying in the sand, the bitter rust of desire is eating my breast.

It is blinding my eyes with red dust.

. . .



BOOK IV

*The Silence and Mystery*



---

I.

THE DESERT OF MY HEART ADJOINS THE visible desert, making it greater still, and silence adds a veil above my veil with fingers of air and sand.

And silence adds a cry to all the cries with her mouth of air and sand.

And silence adds an image to the images with her eyes of air and sand.

And under my two veils I live two lives, to hear you and to see you, whom I would not name, whose name each beat of my heart is crying aloud.

2.

The Arabs, the conquered sons of the conquered and who speak like horses, say that we bear the Veil to keep us from the evil of the dust of the West ; but that is because they lie.

Men of our dignity may not be seen.

Seven sorrows upon the man who shows his mouth, for the mouth is a leprous well where the devil of the tongue is lying in wait, for the mouth is a holy house and the angel of the word abides there.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

Seven sorrows upon the man who shows his  
mouth, for there a devil and an angel live in  
chains together.

3.

Your law is my master, O Dāsīn, but the law of  
the Veil is my guide ; it is my leader across  
the sand where the camel of each man passes.  
If the law of love is harder and brighter than  
emeralds and powdered gold,  
The law of the dark Veil is clearer than the light ;  
I must hide my face in anger and in pride, in  
love and suffering ; I must hide my face in  
death.

4.

And I must draw into myself, O Dāsīn, to veil  
my face from God for the five prayers of the  
day.

I must veil my face before old age to do obeisance  
to its old belief.

I must veil my face before my equal in nobility  
to do obeisance to our splendour.

I must veil my face before woman to do obeisance  
to her beauty, for it is as the beauty of that

*From the Tamashek*

moon which drapes a black veil before the cheeks of the sun.

Thus shall I dwell in truth and reach the seven rivers of the Garden of God.

And even as I veil my face before the wisdom of the years of my father, so must I be gone from him and leave him when he hears the song of the imzad and has thoughts of love: a palm tree, a father of palm trees, when the Summer sun returns.

5.

No woman has kissed my mouth, because I may not unveil my face; I may not unveil more than the nostrils of my face at gallant parties; I must keep my lips from all profane possession.

But you are noble, O Dāsīn, even as I am noble; I will taste the lust of your heart in the breath of your mouth, I will pass my life in my breath to the lips of my beloved.

6.

I slept on the hot desert with your name in my heart, and my dream carried your name from

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

my heart to my lips ; at dawn in that place where my lips had kissed your name, I saw this flower which withers not, I saw the sand rose.

Each morning, that I might have strength to make your glance tender, I said my prayer towards the Eastern light in this way :

‘ See, O Sultān of Gods, O Guide and Eye of Heaven, the palm tree and the hill and the falcon have hastened and risen higher than You into the sky, that they may mount guard.

‘ Awake and climb, O Sun, climb higher than my voice, climb higher than the cries of the caravan, higher than the crying of the simoom, for he would roll your gold face in a black veil.

‘ O the gold rose, the honey and the lion and the fire, leave night, for she is dying, she is old and cold and sad, leave her to the jackal that howls his desire to her.

‘ Spread the warm oil of your heart in the sky, for our hearts adore your flame, and I will bear you on my brow as a falcon, even as the chief of noble birds of chase, a hawk with golden claws.

‘ I will lay you at the feet of Dāsīn-ult-Yema as a rose of fire.

‘ O you who suffer for love of the moon, and are weary from pursuing her on your gold camel and overtaking her not,

*From the Tamashek*

- ‘ O warrior tamed by the victorious lance of night on the blood-red field of evening, surely you will have pity on Musa-ag-Amāštān and comprehend him.  
‘ Even as you lie down to die before me, you hold out your purple rose that I may take it to our well-beloved.’

7.

Then I said to the silent garden of the night as she piled the black mountain of the sky upon our mountain :

- ‘ I would climb from rock to rock and pluck the silver rose of the moon and the young roses of the stars for Dāsīn.’

The moon is many and yet one, and you, O Dāsīn, are one and yet very many.

Therefore I mingle the two of you in my thoughts, and it is Dāsīn I see in the chamber of the stars at night.

8.

We must be of the desert, O Dāsīn, to know what silence is. It drips from the lamp of each star, it falls from the white grave of the moon.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

There is not any heart beat in the whole sand, it sleeps like the breast of a dead woman whom no kiss can wake. And there is neither bird nor tree to sing.

And he who does not know these things may say that he has never been alone.

I laid myself down in the vastness, and it dug the naked shield of the cradle and the grave beneath my feet.

9.

We must have seen a dead man couched in the desert to know how noble and beautiful he stays, he is in a sleep which wakes by the side of God.

The sun tans him as gazelle skin, and the spirits of evil odour do not haunt him ; he is like a gold statue, and the lion guards him.

10.

To-day the silence was so full of you that the earth beneath my fingers fell into your shape, and I watched it dance in my hands, and you came forth from my heart and gave it breath.

*From the Tamashek*

And I thought of our game of making in red  
clay the falcon and the hound and the horse,  
the camel and the woman.

II.

The turning and returning days are full of gall,  
and patience is the key of time.  
I sit all night by the side of death, and he looks  
upon me. I try to tell him to take me, but  
cannot find my voice.  
My heart opens and speaks *Dāsīn* to death, and  
death smiles and lets me live.

12.

A light was born in the light, a silence was born  
in the silence, and I heard your voice with the  
voice of your violin :  
'Musa has washed the name of Aflān from my  
life, and earth heeds nothing but Musa travel-  
ling upon her to come to me.'  
And I saw in my heart my green rice-field  
offering the white pearls of its rice to me, O  
you my green rice-field, you my rice. I would  
eat you under my black veil, *Dāsīn*.  
Glory be to God who has given me the wings

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*  
of my red camel ; he carries me to the camp  
of her I love.

Glory be to the Prophet who has borne the  
torch of the word of God into the desert, to  
light a sun which shall not be quenched in the  
night of grief.

If the teeth of sorrow were blacker than the  
black mountains,

If the teeth of night were longer than those of  
death on the seventh day of mourning,

Yet would the Name of God gild them all over  
as the name of Dāsīn is made gold in my  
mouth.

13.

Her whom I love is Dāsīn, and they know  
this well, from the ant to the camel upon  
my way, from the slave to the proud in  
heart.

The ant counts the paces of this notorious love,  
the camel chews on the taste of it, the slave  
weighs its chain, and the proud in heart raises  
the prayer of it.

How should I hide this love ?

It is not in my hand, to be in any way shaken from  
it ; it is in the hardest of my heart and nothing  
can make it fall.

*From the Tamashek*

14.

You are calling me in the mimosa, for his flower is blowing ; you are calling in the gum tree, his sugar is shining ; you are calling in the date palm, for his fruit is leaning to me, and in the oued, for his water trembles.

You are calling in the mimosa. The word of the Saint of Teleya was true, that you would some day love me. He said to me : ' Who loves you, were it a dog, you will some day love.'

15.

My naked feet hasten my camel, for Dāsīn awaits us. The unseen spirits of the twilight creep from the last rays and decorate the earth : they are leather workers with ochre and blood and saffron squates and cordings ; and a thread of black night surrounds these coloured things.

Earth is a vast red leather mat of execution, and Dāsīn gives herself naked to the love of the sword.

My camel uses all the fat of his hump in running, for Dāsīn awaits us.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

16.

My camel and I stretch forth our necks to you.  
Will you sing of our coming ?

The moon makes our shadow run before us  
along the sand. There is a blue cloud rolling  
to Dāsīn upon the blue mountain. No raider  
can stay it ; your name has made it invincible.  
Why am I not the thunder or the hot wind to  
come to you swiftly ?

The song of desire, Dāsīn, is older than the  
rocks of the mountain.

The song of desire is my song. It swells my  
tongue to a red pimento, it burns my blood  
like pepper ; it twists me in the sand like a  
snake, it makes me leap in the sand like a  
hunting leopard.

I am maddened and scream and slaver at the  
mouth.

17.

Does the demon tear you as he tears me ? Is he  
more tender to your tenderness ? I think of  
the old words, the young words of the man  
who was at Abadal :

‘ I was at Abadal, and there I died of desire to  
hear the sound of hair strings on the calabash.

*From the Tamashek*

‘ I dreamed of a young girl who makes music in the South, and I said to my camel : We must go swiftly from Abadal.’

18.

The camel of the man who was at Abadal ran with his legs, Dāsīn.

My camel loves you even as I love you. He gallops with his heart also to kneel before you.

. . .



BOOK V

*The Return*



---

I.

THE MOON IS MIGHTY TO-NIGHT AND increases in brightness to lighten the way to Dāsīn.

Look at the moon from the gallery of your dwelling to-night, how great she is upon Ilaman.

When the moon is mighty they say a king is journeying in her light.

2.

I did not know that I told you the truth, Dāsīn, saying that the moon grows great with a halo for the journeys of kings.

But my brothers came forth to meet me upon their whitest camels, making gunpowder sing for me, bringing the purple bernous and the war drum of leadership.

And the eldest among them said :

‘Greeting be upon you ! The deeds you have done in the desert make you our king.’

3.

Then the warriors said to me :

‘Seven honours upon Musa-ag-Amāštān, our

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

Amenokhal, favoured of the Saint of Teleya,  
who is most holy.

‘Seven honours upon him who has crossed the  
desert gloriously to Timbuctoo.

‘The Niger is no bound to his authority.’

4.

And I said : ‘Unroll the fringes of the carpets  
of return for me.

‘Dāsīn awaits me, and there is no fairer purple.

‘This is the horizon she looks upon, and this the  
earth her walking lightly touches. These  
mimosas powder her brow with gold, this  
dwelling puts a garment upon her garment.’

It is the hour of the coming together of women  
to do you homage.

They till the earth and take its colour, they have  
left the reeds of their singing houses to carry  
gifts to you.

They balance wooden dishes of green water-  
melons.

And at their breasts the rose fruit lies like  
children.

5.

And your noble sisters have decked themselves  
in bracelets of silver and glass and goat horn.

*From the Tamashek*

Their rings are so many and so great that they may not labour at all.

They come to offer you tunics sewn with a cunning thorn, and little cords of the wool of wild sheep.

6.

They marry the white flowers of your choice to the green diss, as supple as a greyhound, to call down love upon you as they walk along.

The rose tears of the tamarind fall upon them as they smile at me.

They greet me at your door with the marriage song and the song of fruitfulness.

They are as beautiful as the antelope and the hare, who were our mothers.

7.

They sing this marriage song :

We are hungry, *You shall eat.* We are naked,  
*We will clothe you.* We are walking, *You shall be set upon camels.*

They sing this song of fruitfulness :

I have seen dates this year such as the hand gives not to the tongue.

I have seen gold and silver threaded together

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

this year. I have seen the water of the well  
this year and I have drunk of it.

I have seen antelope fawns this year, as tender  
as children, and they spoke to me, softening  
their voices.

I saw a colt this year and the love of him wounded  
me. He feeds in a cornfield. If he were for  
sale I would get a thousand boys by him.

8.

My feet are set upon the border of the carpet of  
desire, and I do not move. I am bound hand  
and foot to happiness.

You hold the water-jar of your imzad to the  
water-jar of your proud body ; your greeting  
is as soft as moonlight, yet it shoots joy  
through me like a gun.

But above your voice I hear the voice of my  
father, saying :

‘ Take thought before you pass the threshold of  
the honeycomb.’

9.

I overleapt the stone of thought ; I see you  
glittering in the night of your palace, and I  
shut my eyes.

*From the Tamashuk*

Who is about you, what men are considering  
you? What women are singing and what  
slaves are dancing? I cannot answer that.  
I see you alone and naked for me beneath  
your veils.

10.

Your jewels press red and blue kisses, drops of  
blood and azure, upon your body which is  
stretched out to me.  
My lips conceive of doubling the number of  
them.  
The doves of joy set their white flights upon my  
brow, for it has drawn near to yours.  
Will the men never cease from telling their  
combats, and the women of singing their lies  
to the last lie?  
Will the slaves not spare us of the dance of the  
days a single day?

11.

Your imzad has a single string but a thousand  
voices; it drives these proud bucks and  
bleating she-goats into silence.  
Now I hear you and see you.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

Stones rise in the sky like eagles and tortoises  
croon like doves.

The snakes of a waterless land turn into rivulets,  
and the blue gum trees weep gold tears.

The simoom folds his wings of fire, and shivers  
in the cold. And the dead return.

12.

Now that the gallant party is finished, I open  
my eyes again to stay them with the sight of  
you.

All the men who have passed their turn in your  
bed are no more than clouds passing before  
the moon.

When the clouds have gone she shines as  
purely.

I have forgotten even Aflān.

He lives not, he is not dead, whom you love no  
more.

And the women my father gave to me were no  
more to me than vapours of the dew to the  
sun who makes them.

13.

I see the dwelling built for you, its courtyard  
watching the night like an unveiled head.

*From the Tamashek*

I see the gallery, an airy road for you.

You will come down from it at the hour of the  
rising dust when the flocks return.

You will press the udders of our goats and our  
she-camels, as the moon draws off the silver  
milk from the nipples of the stars at  
night.

Why do your eyes still look at the door which  
has shut upon the last guest ?

He was an Amrar, commanding a great tribe ;  
but he has not fought. He stays like a tent-  
peg among the pegs of his tent.

Would you choose him as your guide now that  
you have flown free again ?

He who drinks from a pitcher is no good guide.  
I have fought many fights, and drink from the  
hollow of my hand.

14.

But why does your hand in this emptiness put a  
gag upon my kiss ?

Why does your body glide away from mine ?

Do you not know me well enough, the son of  
the sister of your mother ?

I will open the book of my life and read for you  
at hazard there, for you will see that your  
name is written on each page.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

15.

I have graven your name on the stone of the blue mountain that guards the gold of the sun at morning.

I have graven it also in the stone of the black mountain that guards the gold of the sun at night.

The sky of God writes out your name for ever with an ink of gold.

16.

My father has never forgiven your marriage with Afān. He wished me to marry a certain imperious woman of a haughty house.

I refused my father.

We would not have thrust out our necks to the same branches.

She would have dressed herself in pride, and I gone naked.

If she had been a barrel brimmed with camel milk and I thirsting, I would not have drunk of her.

I said to my father :

‘If a man put a cord about his neck, God will find someone to pull on it.’





PAWAP

*From the Tamashek*

My father then questioned me in the language of our fathers :

‘ Would you pass by a well without drinking and giving your camel to drink ?

‘ Would you see a traveller without questioning him ?

‘ Not so, for you obey the laws of the desert which God wrote on the stones of it.

‘ O my son, O my noble camel, listen then to my laws.’

17.

Then my father asked Kashuni from her people. And all men said with him :

‘ When Kashuni came to girlhood many women were put away and did not know why. Many camels were worn out in visiting her and men died by the sword. Saints came as ambassadors to the house of her mother, but her mother had chosen Musa-ag-Amāštān and paid no attention.’

Again I refused.

18.

Would you know the joy of bearing by me ?  
It is the dawn and the dove, the dawn and the dove and the white river.

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

You would say :

‘ I have cradled a son of the strong Master with  
the leopard’s heart, I have suckled a son of  
the just Master with the lips of peace.

‘ I laugh and my laugh is a rose,

‘ As rose as the henna of a child’s hand.’

19.

Or do you wish me as the brother and lover of  
your body ?

Or do you wish me one of the slain on the sand  
where there are no stones to bear witness ?

Would you roll wool of the finest fleece for me  
in the blood of henna,

Henna as red as your heart ?

20.

I stretch forth my hands to you, O God, and ask  
for the love of Dāsīn-ult-Yema.

I ask it in an invisible mosque that I have built for  
You, more beautiful because it is not.

How should hands that God built of clay build  
clay into a house for God ?

BOOK VI

*The Possession and Death*



---

I.

YOU ARE MINE NOW. YOUR ARMS ARE  
stretched out to me like palm trees, your  
hands have lifted the veil from my lips.  
I have gone down into your love as into a tomb,  
life has closed over me.  
What pleasure could sugared fruits and the  
honey give me now?  
I have known your kiss.  
What drunkenness could fighting give me  
now?

2.

Her kiss has the greedy smell of bread of date  
flour with hot butter.  
It has the scent of the mimosa as she laughs to  
the blue gum tree under the gold hand of the  
morning.  
Her skin is as soft as bread.  
She is an antelope fawn going from gum tree  
to gum tree, eating the green leaves all the  
Summer night.  
She is a white camel, she is the fringes of red  
belts, she is a grape ripening in the valley  
where the date is ripening.  
Dāsīn is the thread of the pearls of my collar, the

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

7.

I stay.

I would sing Dāsīn-ult-Yema and her white camel and her saddle with ornaments, the whiteness of Dāsīn upon the whiteness of her camel.

It is as the Prophet appearing among his people. Dāsīn is the white moon, and I ask of God who rolled her in His hand to write me among His number.

There is no more. I stay and I cease to sing. I would hear her upon the violin that steals her voices.

8.

It is because God gave senses to the violin, so that when it sings men cease from speaking and every hand pulls down a veil over the eyes, that I most adore Him.

My camel and I were called by your violin, and we came to you and had peace.

I would rather not have known that peace, because you have broken it like a water-jar.

I am a blind man, seizing at shadows and falling upon death.

Keep my camel, for he will not leave you. I am going I know not whither.

*From the Tamashuk*

9.

All grains of rice have the same taste, all dates  
the same honey.

I told you that I would go to see women, and  
be comforted.

They were all beautiful and all the same.

Dāsīn was different.

10.

NAWAH SALAF

I passed over the seas to gallant cities ; but the  
palm of a man's hand cannot hide the  
sun.

Who was she that came to me in the red veils of  
hashish, to lie against me as upon coals ?

Who said to me : *Take my heart*, and cried so  
terribly when I tore it from her.

I killed her because I had to kill that night ; I  
did not know her name ; I was killing every  
woman when I killed her.

11.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, will you be smiling awake,  
or will you be pretending sleep, when I lift

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

the fold of the garment that covers your head  
on my return ?

If you drive me away again, Dāsīn-ult-Yema, the  
sharpened knives of the sun must bury my  
shame in the desert.

12.

Dāsīn did not look at my red hand, where the  
life of the woman was weeping.

Dāsīn did not look at my red hand. She was on  
her way to smile at red flamingoes.

I pressed the fruit of every lip in the city with  
disgust.

Time has counted his gold beads over and over  
since I set forth again.

13.

I lived because you judged me more worthy  
than Afān to bring up your golden boy, my  
name child.

The flesh of your flesh was near me, and I was  
still the eagle, the king of the people.

His eyes dwelt upon me with the eyes of your  
childhood mingled with my childhood ; but  
he died fighting as a lion dies.

*From the Tamashek*

I partake of the ash upon your brow ; there  
is but one thing a man may give to a  
woman's grief, and that you do not want  
from me.

14.

You did not wish to see me, but the Saint  
of Teleya came to me bearing your farewell,  
and bringing me pardon.

My tears behold your tears ; you are more  
beautiful under your tears than the earth in  
rain.

One morning far from now you will smile again  
at sunrise, astonished to smile. It will not be  
at Musa-ag-Amāstān.

The lion cub slain in battle would have moaned  
between us for ever.

15.

The Amenokhal of the men whiter than we,  
who commands the armies from the North,  
together with his warriors and the slaves who  
serve him,

He who has come to avenge the great captain of  
the first white harka,

*Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

He says that he will make us greater and more beautiful with my help.

I cannot live without Dāsīn-ult-Yema. Let another take my place at that captain's side.

16.

The black month that killed Sidna Slimān,  
Master of Jinn, is upon me now.

I will enter without fear among the dead.

Let them leave me alone with my black slaves.

Uthmān, stay at my head towards the East;  
stay at my feet towards the West, O Ilmak;  
so that I may die as a day dies between two  
nights.

Let the word of pardon fall upon my brow  
from God.

17.

God allows further that I should say this to you,  
my brothers in battle and in prayer :

He who has been alone in life would be alone in  
death,

Bury me between the breasts of the desert,

She is better than the visited tomb for him who

*From the Tamashuk*

shall have neither offering nor prayer, but only sleep.

And I affirm the Unity of God, the second finger of my right hand being raised up to Him :

There is no God but God !

To him who dies of great love there needs a great forgetting.

18.

*O my cousin, O son of the sister of my mother, they say that you are dead.*

*I climb the hill and take stones and bury my heart.*

*I smell the scent of you between my breasts, darling, and it is fire.*

. . .



*Camel-Boy*  
*Rhythms*







NAWAB SALAF JUNG SAHAJUR.

---

---

I

*Compliment for Radya*

*AS LOVERS SING THEIR GIRLS  
Saying they are like gardens  
So paint my beauty,*

*Pour damask wine with compliment.*

Therefore I said to her  
Whose lids are curved swords :

I have poured wine  
And nothing except the water of your mouth  
Is like it at all.

It is a crystal flame,  
As fresh as water from the rock,  
Soft as wild honey.

It has the odour of a basket of fruits  
From some green eye of God  
Among the deserts :  
But the smell of your body  
Is preferred to it.

Your breasts were ripened in the hands of the  
Prophet,  
They are apples smoothed with myrrh.

*The Antidote*

WHEN YOUR STARS HAVE BURNED ME  
My thirsting love leans out  
To the wet fruit of your lips.

Your closing eyelids are shadowed wings  
For a protection  
Beating over the lavender garden.

I drink an antidote for your eyes  
In a place of snow.

. . .

*Inflexible*

IF I TOLD MY PAIN TO AN INDIAN SWORD,  
Yamena,  
It would melt in hearing.

If I spoke of my torment to the rocks of the  
mountain  
They would weaken and turn to sand.

Give me a feather of hope, disdainful falcon,  
For my torture has lasted too long  
And the waiting tears me.

But the girl with the tattooed brow made  
answer,  
Parting her veil :  
' When shall the bitter almond be made sweet? '

May the Jinn ravish you,  
Virgin without a soul !  
May the sky strike you !  
By the Face of the Compassionate God,  
By the Letters of the Book,  
By the Triumph of the Name,  
Be cursed, be cursed !

Your eyes are killing me,  
Yamena, gentle one.

. . .

*Song*

**D**EER OF THE RIVER,  
Dove of the rocks,  
O gold,  
Your hair is the silk  
Of the feathers of the maize, O falcon.

Your eyes are waters of the oasis  
Mirroring date palms,  
Your body,  
Fastened at the breasts with coral,  
Is opal gauze.

You are like Stamboul  
Because of the number of your fervent,  
Your feet are pigeons with silver collars,  
They carry messages of love  
And death.

. . .

*Love's Warrior*

**H**IS MARE IS AS WHITE AS FLAX,  
As a king's war tent,  
As the dome of holiness.

He has gold reins  
And his pistols are gilded,  
The dust rises before his riding  
In storms of fear.

He defies the princes of the world  
And his beauty is terrible,  
Who but Fātimah of the rash dark glances  
Would dare provoke him ?

. . .

*Sovereign*

HER EYES ARE CUT STONES  
Shining and staying cold,  
Her cheek is the opening of poppies,  
Her cardinal lips are tinted  
Like Morocco leather.

Her neck is the mast of a ship  
Kissed by the fortunate breezes of the sea,  
It is a tower above God's house.

Her breasts are like silver crowns  
On the butts of pistols,  
There is a coral ball let into each.

Her body is a flushed sword.

When she comes proud and dressed  
My eyes must fear her,  
My soul hates and adores her  
For her cruel pride.

But when she lies naked and quiescent  
On my dark carpet,  
Seeing the doves of her kissing knees  
I cannot believe her evil.

. . .

*Youth*

LITTLE BRANCH OF YOUTH.  
Your cheek is coloured with copper apples.

Tell me what roses,  
What flowering almond trees,  
What garden with fountains saw you born,  
Closed flower,  
One morning fifteen months of May ago ?

. . .

THE JUNG BAHADUR

*In the Street of the Women*

**L**IGHT SHOWS BETWEEN THE BEAMS OF YOUR  
door  
And there are many of us.

The old woman, pulling at the red curtain,  
Peers among us,  
But she will not catch my eye.

Once I gave you a French mirror  
With other delights,  
And you mouthed my nipples  
And called me your Sultān ;  
Now there are many of us  
And light shows between the beams of your door.

. . .

*To the Fair Anointed*

**F**AIR, ANOINTED WITH ZEBED AND ESSENCES,  
 Deer of the thyme-planted plains,  
 Palm tree of Hanif,  
 Mare of the Juad,

Apricot orchard,  
 Dove of the penthouse,  
 Spots of the panther,  
 Moon of accomplishment,

Honey from a comb the bee has kneaded,  
 Wheat in the ear,  
 Tressed silk,  
 O pure gum benjamin,

Diet of dates,  
 Striped muslin,  
 Riding of riders,  
 O crescent cutting the nights,

You are as El-Jezireh,  
 Pomegranate of Paradise,  
 For the rich only.

*Spring*

**D**AWN SCATTERS PEARLS FROM EITHER HAND.

The flowers of the almond come abroad  
And the breeze sows them upon the roses.

The amaranth and the purple  
Woo the jasmine terrace.

The clove tree and the sweet-briar  
Shine in their colours.

The birds in the green leaves sing their verse :  
*He is Allāh, the only, over and over.*

The stars of the orange set in his branches  
And I fail for love  
Because the brightness of your mouth  
Has touched these things.

. . .

*Why?*

**G**AZELLE,  
Why am I driven to your feet ?

Why are the swords of your soldiers bright for  
ever

Though you are faithless,  
Why is my love a broken knife ?

Why does your beauty trouble the wit of man  
And the fold of your eyebrow, eagle, hold in  
chains ?

Why do the leaves of my branches strew the  
earth,  
Why is my garden wasted ?

Why does your meadow, breathing of the balm  
tree,  
Deny my flocks ?

Why is your body needful to me ?

Why do the readers of the Korān  
Find you like wine ?

*Camel-Boy Rhythms*

Why am I as a dead man already washed,  
Why do you refuse me resurrection ?

Why do my hopes break  
As a ruin of mountains ?

Why have you lost me ?

. . .

*The Burden of Love*

THE BURDEN OF LOVE

**T**Is greater than the vigour of my body.  
The rank of my mistress  
Surpasses the height of that star  
Just setting to the West.

As a burned land waits for the rain  
I wait for the beauty of this woman.

Flow more swiftly down to me, water of my life,  
Hasten, O river,  
Before the woof of my day falls from the loom  
Where Allāh weaves.

. . .

## *Camel-Boy Rhythms*

Tell her I sing her ripening citrons  
And her ivory flanks  
And her little feet as plump as knuckle-bones.

Tell her I sing the small flowers of her nails  
Red as carnation,  
And the down of her cheek  
Like the powdering of waterfalls  
In the morning sun.

Tell her I sing and turn  
And weep and am on fire.

May the morning be fortunate to you,  
Rider with spurs of lightning,  
May your journey be prosperous !  
If you pass by the tribe of the fairest among  
women,  
Ask after her bended brows, my lord.

. . .

*Meeting*

THE POISON WIND HAS BLOWN ALL DAY.

As the sun went down  
It swelled the silks of Lubna  
Like the breast of a dove,  
But she did not move her veil  
Or turn her head.

The cloud has passed above us without granting  
water,  
Its thunder has grumbled without spreading rain.

. . .

*How Many*

PALM OF OUR GARDENS,  
How many have your lids killed like knives?  
Your breasts are quinces shaken  
Under figured silk,  
How many hungers have they lighted?  
Your hands are turning ivories,  
They are flowered with rings.  
How many thirsts stretch forth  
Toward your cups?

. . .

*Song*

**H**ER WALKING IS A CYPRESS IN THE GARDENS  
of Mornag,  
Her body is a lance set above mosques,  
As white as spinning silk.

I used to get drunk on the light of swords,  
But love spurred from the ambush of her face  
And has unseated me.

. . .

*The Sand Gazelle*

WHEN YOU SEE ME BENEATH YOUR STRIPED  
veils

Your breasts tremble, Hudhailah.  
As timid as the sand gazelle,  
What do you fear when I meet you ?

Does the red furnace in my breast  
Scorch your tenderness ?

Is the ocean of love  
Roaring from my heart  
And seeking to die down at your fragile feet  
So terrible  
That you will not bathe them in it ?

Or have you guessed that God made love  
Out of a red furnace and a roaring sea ?

The wave and the flame of my passion  
Are dancing about your body of pearl  
And your closed heart.

That is why  
When you see me beneath your striped veils  
Your breasts tremble, Hudhailah.

*Song*

THE JUJUBE PLUM TREES  
Grow by the town where I was born,  
We boys played knuckle-bones  
With the dropped fruit of  
The jujube plum trees.  
At night in Spring  
All the town smelt of the flowers of  
The jujube plum trees,  
As sweet as the breath  
Of one who played knuckle-bones  
With my expectant heart,  
But lay with me at last under  
The jujube plum trees.

. . .

*Wakefulness*

---

I WAKE UNDER THE TENT WHILE OTHERS  
sleep,  
Because of black glances  
Shining below curls of hair.

I compare myself with the sleepers,  
God's peace is over them,  
I wake to dream of raping her slim body.

I suffer for dark eyes and for a palm tree  
And for a striped veil ;  
She does not deign to turn her glances upon me  
That rape my sleep.

. . .

*Love's Bird*

HER BROWS ARE TWO LETTERS NUN TRACED  
On the same line,  
Her eyes are drawn with a wine-sombre ink  
On rare paper,  
Her small mouth is a rivulet of honey  
And her cheeks have the scarlet of allspice.

Rise in your flight,  
Spread forth your wings,  
Sweet-footed gentle pigeon.

Circle toward the tribe of Nejma  
At the hour of prayer,  
And when the morning comes  
Drop down into her breast.

Tell her that I am as one  
Whose wound has reached the bone,  
He cannot draw the blade from it.

I was a partridge coming down to drink  
And a hunter crept upon me.

Sweet-footed gentle pigeon  
With the knowing eye,  
Drop down into the breast of Nejma  
At the hour of prayer :  
By her very delicate skin  
You will know Nejma.

. . .

*The Partridge*

I HAVE CAUGHT YOU  
But will not kill you,  
Partridge fallen among the lentisk trees.  
Your feet are coloured like Āishah's,  
They are painted red.  
They are painted with the henna of the heels  
Of my well-loved one.  
My desire has not touched her  
And her heart flies far away.

. . .

*Image*

THIS IMAGE IS MADE FOR HER WHOSE MOUTH  
Is pure design.

I nourish myself in you  
As flowers in the water of a cup,  
I breathe your love  
As other men breathe roses.

You are a garden of jasmine and carnation  
Tangled together,  
Complaining in incense.

As cool as dew,  
As troublous as sweet wine,  
Your flanks are of sea pearl.

This image is made for her whose mouth  
Is pure design.

. . .

*Propitious Hour*

I MET A GIRL THIS DUSK  
Who had cheek-bones as rose  
As the arbutus tree,  
And held her in my arms.  
Good luck, she said,  
O falcon full of ardour.  
Kiss my small mouth,  
When night comes you shall pick my fruit.

. . .

*A Lonely Garden*

THE SKY IS LIGHTLESS AND THE SPRING  
useless,  
The flowers open without a reason,  
Their perfumes waste in air.

Under the shadow of the lemon tree,  
White with blossom,  
Swollen with bees,  
I plunge my wrists into the runlets of water  
And my fever remains.

I remember you  
Under the rose tree of your choosing.

When the heavy roses  
Weary of waiting so long for you  
Let fall their purple tears,  
It is as if Christians were burning incense  
Before their dead.

My head used to rest upon your arm  
When I was asleep.

Allāh, if you would have me live,  
Paint from my heart the image of her little  
slippers  
Upon the threshold of my door  
Set side by side.

*The Carpets*

SHE STAYED HER STEPS  
In front of certain opening flowers  
And parted her veil in the sunlight  
To breathe the noon.

She pointed to a carpet of Shiraz  
Decking a balustrade :  
' The flowers and the silks  
Have the same abundant colour,  
And it is as if the same hand  
Had interlaced them.

' But the flower carpet  
Is lent you for a short Spring only,  
Its colours fade up in perfume as we speak  
Like a smoke of incense.'

Therefore  
Let us love desperately now,  
Your beauty is hot as amber.

. . .

*The Moon's Message*

THE MOON BORROWED YOUR VEIL OF BLUE  
silk

And bore me a message ;

I killed my white horse

And set the night on fire

To come to you.

You waited me, a field of lilies

On the shadowy carpet ;

My mouth is sweet with kissing your neck

And bitter with the henna of your feet.

. . .

NAWAB SALAR JUNG B

*Sorcery*

**H**AWTHORN, I BURN YOU FOR LOVE OF SA'ID,  
Arm of the panther.

Iris root, I mingle you with hawthorn  
That he may desire me.

O dwarf jujube plum tree,  
Come with your branch to swell the fire  
To make my image a ghost about his thought.

O fir-apple, may Sa'id be thirsty for Zainah.

O green oak, may all other women  
Be powerless to draw him from me.

Lavender, that my beloved upon my mouth  
Be as an eagle with broken wings.

O violet fig, my husband is very old,  
May God grant him His sleep.

O every plant,  
Seal up the sense of an old and jealous man  
And give me to the love of Sa'id,  
Arm of the panther.

*Mas'ūda*

MAS'ŪDA IS GRACIOUS AS A ONE-YEAR HIND,  
And when she passes,  
Because of the smallness of her feet  
Earth keeps no trace of her.

Her neck is a flower after rain,  
Her eyes are turquoises in silver.

When Mas'ūda smiles  
We think of hailstones  
Dropped in a Persian rose.

Her arms are white adders  
Marked with blue markings,  
And her hair is rays of the rising sun  
Tressed in a skein.

She is a dove from a fine cote  
And has killed me with her gentleness.

. . .

*The Feast of Pardon*

**I**T IS THE FEAST OF PARDON.

‘ Gather again the figs and the pomegranates  
From my orchard,  
Pasture again upon the breasts of the beloved,  
For it is the Feast of Pardon,’

I fell on my face like a drunken man  
And then rose up to dance ;  
My tent is swollen with treasure  
On the Feast of Pardon.

. . .

*To an Ouled Nail*

**Y**OUR BROW IS LIKE A WALL PLASTERED  
with lime,  
And your breasts are ready pears.

The bands of your hair are black  
Under silver fillets.

Your eyes are like holes  
Where serpents lie in wait for ants,  
Or coals beginning to grow red.

Musk is in all your ornaments.

Your belly is a melon rolling under silk  
When you are dancing.

God knows why you are sombre before your  
door  
With heavy rings.

God knows why your mouth does not smile  
To show your teeth,  
Bleached bones on the desert of your heart.

You fear neither life nor death,  
You follow your destiny.

God knows why.

*Satisfaction*

YOU FED MY THIRST WITH A DISDAIN  
More bitter than aloes,  
But now the gold of your pride  
Is tumbled in the sand.

A rider passing in youth  
Knew how to take you ;  
And now he rides down other loves.

You are a door with a broken lock,  
Robbed of its secret.

. . .

*Riding*

AT NIGHT I WAS TOLD SHE WAITED FOR ME.  
I mounted my swart horse ;  
Dawn drew her sword against the darkness  
And cut a way for me.

. . .

*To a Dancer*

THE FAITHFUL REJOICE AFTER RAMADĀN;  
Women are the macerations of the fast to  
me,

You are my feasting :  
And when you begin to dance  
My heart pricks up his ears.

If I were a snake  
I would band your legs together with my body,  
And rest my head  
In the crook of your perfume cresset,  
For the mad thought of that place  
Is choking me.

. . .

*Farewell*

AS THE SUN WALKS TOWARD THE SEA  
He throws burning torches before him  
Into the water.

He walks in gold,  
He walks as a bride in coloured garments,  
His red and green garments, and as blue  
As the glances of a Christian slave  
His garments.

Call him farewell as he drowns,  
For night comes drumming  
To veil him and take away.

My love was a sun  
Gilding your indifference a little while,  
Now he is drowned in the sea of his tears  
Cold with your coldness.

Cry farewell to him.

. . .

*Anger in Love*

ONE DAY I MADE YOU VERY ANGRY.

You rose in the rage of your torrential hair  
And knotted the little adders of your arms ;  
The rings of your fingers shone like eyes  
And you defied me.

Your feet were closed blossoms,  
The flowers of your heels were not parted,  
You trembled and were as beautiful  
As a silver sword.

But I knew how to cool you  
So that you gave way beneath my mouth.  
Then were your eyes stars in a dark river  
And your face a drowned moon  
In the lake of night.

. . .

*Litanies*

---

---

ALLĀH, WHO RIPENS THE FRUIT FOR AUTUMN,  
Give me Zubaidah of the fine garments.

Allāh, who created the pomegranate,  
Give me Zubaidah of the bleeding lips.

Allāh, who made fig blossom,  
Give the musk flesh of Zubaidah.

Allāh, who fashioned new almonds,  
Make her to smile on me.

Allāh, who planted the orchard of Sahel,  
Give me to Zubaidah,  
For she is a tree with fruits.

Allāh, who thought the first dark poppy,  
Now grant her husband sleep and that she say  
*come.*

. . .

*The Rape*

SHE HAS THE DARK WATER EYES OF A  
 gazelle  
 Feeding upon flowers.

The fish leaps between the breasts of the ocean,  
 When he is drawn forth from the waters  
 He lies as an image of such as I  
 On the hot shore.

I have compared her to a forest of banners,  
 To a wood of poplar trees,  
 She trembles in her disdain as a mare trembles  
 Saddled before the battle.

I surprised her in the time of sleep,  
 She had unclasped her girdle ;  
 The men of her tribe pursued me,  
 Crying *Kill him, kill him !*

By the prophet Ahmad and by David, O Allāh,  
 I hope for clemency ;  
 Give me two bold companions for the darkness  
 That I may see again the daughter of the Amīr  
 Al-Kazwīnī  
 In her far tribe.

*The Victor*

LISTEN TO THE REASONS  
For the lightness of my singing,  
O you who hear my gay embroideries  
Of silk on song.

My joy is flowers growing in my breast,  
My heart a coffer brimming with necklaces,  
And the coloured crystals of my song  
Escape sometimes.

There are narcissus eyes  
Glancing in perfume to the soul,  
There are flowery lights.

There is drunkenness of lips,  
There is a scarlet mouth,  
A coral cup.

There are white orange seeds  
Ranged side by side  
On purple silk.

There is a garden of carnations,  
And by what miracle has a grain of musk  
Fallen among them ?

## *Camel-Boy Rhythms*

There is a crystal path,  
And in a land where neither rain nor dew falls  
A heart of palm.

There are two pomegranates  
With silk rinds,  
The height of God's achievement.

There are jasmine and wallflowers,  
Rivers and honeycombs,  
Baskets of rosemary  
And tufts of basil.

I have not put on armour  
Nor thundered my horse to the assault  
To win these things.

I have come unarmed,  
Setting my hand to my crushed breast ;  
I have fallen as if for prayer at two jacinthine  
feet  
To win these things.

. . .

*Song*

WHEN SHE WHOSE BRIGHTNESS INSULTS  
the emerald  
Walks in our garden,  
The odour of each yearning rose tree  
So takes on sweetness  
That the dew rolls from them  
In a true rose-water.

O falcons of the air,  
Fly after this wild dove for me  
And drive her down into my breast  
To sleep.

. . .

*Vision*

---

HER BODY HIDES UNDER SEVEN TUNICS,  
But the breasts of it  
Seem to be breaking through.

Her leg is a virgin yataghan  
In a prince's fingers,  
Her wrist shines like a mirror.

Her cheek has the light of Aldebaran  
Taking his place among the constellations.

Her nose is as a falcon  
Lit in a garden,  
Defying with its wings.

Her eyebrow is the crescent bending at dusk,  
And the creatures of God regard it.

• • •

*Zohra*

---

WHEN ZOHRA MEETS ME AMONG THE FIELDS  
My heart grows drunk with her  
And staggers to left and right.

When Zohra meets me among the fields  
She seems to waver there  
Like a new asphodel.

Her flushed legs seem to quarrel  
With a bickering of silver,  
The coupled rings of her little half-boots sound  
Like the murmur of the Streams of Paradise :  
Girls, leaning over their images,  
Let fall the drunken flowers of their hair there  
Upon the water.

But when the day goes down without a sight  
of her  
I know the thirst of the ungodly  
Bewildered in the ovens of Hell  
With snakes.

*Yāsamin of the Abid*

THE WOMEN OF THE ABID ARE MOST  
beautiful,  
Expressing all with a sign of the eyebrow  
And disdaining speech.

Yāsamin was the fairest of the Abid,  
The fruits of the others had ripened,  
But she had the tenderness of flower green.

I was as a pilgrim come too late,  
Silver made beautiful with chisels,  
O grafted rose, Yāsamin.

Then you were a garment none had worn ;  
My heart weeps for the beautiful woman  
With the slender belt.

I was as a pilgrim come too late,  
Yāsamin, my darling.

. . .

*Elegy*

**F**IRE IS EATING MY HEART  
As it lies in the tomb of the slight 'Azīzah.  
The young palm tree is cut down  
And the golden grape is trampled,  
The wine of her life has run away.

I am a very brave man,  
But death betrays me.

The young palm tree is cut down  
And the golden grape is trampled,  
The wine of her life has run away.

The twins of her breast  
Were the fawns of a wild hind ;  
I spoke of them as apples,  
My hands were not weary of holding them.

She was my mare,  
Obeying no other rider.

The young palm tree is cut down  
And the golden grape is trampled,  
The wine of her life has run away.

## *Camel-Boy Rhythms*

My fair one died on my breast,  
I looked at her  
And she was for the first time cold.  
I had only one eye when she chose me,  
A thorn had pierced the other.  
I follow my destiny,  
Leave me to weep with my one eye.

Fire is eating my heart  
As it lies in the tomb of the slight 'Azīzah.  
The young palm tree is cut down  
And the golden grape is trampled,  
The wine of her life has run away.











